

# COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS



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## COMMISSION BEGINS PUBLIC HEARING SERIES ON U.S. DETENTION, RELOCATION INVOLVING JAPANESE AMERICANS AND OTHERS IN 1940'S

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians will hold the first of a series of public hearings on July 14 and 16 in Washington, D.C. to examine the facts and circumstances surrounding a wartime executive order issued in 1942 that led to the evacuation and detention in relocation camps in remote areas of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans, Aleut native Americans and Japanese nationals during World War II.

The Commission, created by Congress in July of last year, will begin its hearings, the first official public inquiry into this subject, at 9 a.m. each day in the Caucus Room of the Russell Senate Office Building.

"By creating this commission, the government has told the American people that we are committed enough to our democratic principles to re-examine our actions, inquire into how and what injustice was permitted, and ask what redress is owing," said Commission Chairperson Joan Z. Bernstein. "Few governments ever acknowledge mistakes, much less authorize serious examinations of them. I am proud, we all should be proud, that this commission was established to undertake such an examination."

In addition to reviewing the facts and circumstances surrounding the executive order and its impact on American citizens and permanent resident aliens, Bernstein said the commission will review directives of United States military forces requiring relocation and detention in internment camps, and ultimately will issue a report of its findings and recommendations.

"In the course of our work, the commission will take care to listen to those who have not been listened to before," Bernstein said.

Witnesses scheduled to testify on Tuesday, July 14 include James Rowe, a Washington, D.C. attorney, who served as Assistant to Attorney General Francis

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Biddle in 1942; Leland Barrows, a retired government official who served as Assistant Director of Administrative Management for the War Relocation Authority in 1942, and Abe Fortas, a Washington, D.C. attorney who served as Undersecretary to Interior Secretary Harold Ickes in 1942.

Also appearing before the commission on Tuesday will be witnesses from the Departments of Justice, Interior and State of the Reagan Administration, and from the Center of Military History, Department of the Army.

Other opening day testimony will be received from General Mark Clark, U.S. Army, Ret., who commanded the 442nd (Nisei) Battalion in Europe in World War II; Gordon Hirabayashi, Visiting Professor in Asian American Studies at the University of Washington and plaintiff in *Hirabayashi v. United States*, and Mike Masaoka, former National Secretary and Field Executive of the Japanese American Citizens League in 1942.

Testimony will be heard on July 16 from national Japanese American organizations, the Aleutian/Pribilof Island Association, various legal and civil rights organizations as well as several individual witnesses who will relate personal experiences and the Americans for Historical Accuracy.

Additional hearings have been scheduled in Los Angeles, Calif., on August 4, 5, and 6; in San Francisco, Calif., on August 11, 12 and 13; in Seattle, WA on September 9, 10, and 11; in Anchorage, Alaska on September 15; in Unalaska, Aleutian Islands on September 17; in St. Paul, Pribilof Islands on September 19, and in Chicago, Illinois on September 22 and 23.

Members of the commission in addition to Chairperson Bernstein, a Washington, D.C. attorney, are Rep. Daniel E. Lungren, Vice Chairman, Long Beach, Calif.; former Senator Edward W. Brooke, a Washington, D.C. attorney; Father Robert F. Drinan, President of Americans for Democratic Action; Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, Chairman of the United States Civil Rights Commission; former Justice Arthur J. Goldberg, President of the American Jewish Committee; Father I.V. Gromoff, Unalaska, Aleutian Islands; Judge William M. Marutani, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania; former Senator Hugh B. Mitchell of Washington state.

A complete list of scheduled witnesses and the order of their testimony is attached.